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The Friday Letter

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FNS Applauds Two SES'ers

The FNS family has a lot to be proud of these days! For the first time in FNS history, two of our SES executives have received the President's Meritorious Executive award in the same year.

NERO Regional Administrator Harold McLean and Deputy Administrator for Management Joseph Leo were both awarded the presidential rank award of "Meritorious Executive" for outstanding contributions to the management of the government's programs. Each will receive \$10,000 for their achievements.



At headquarters reception for the two FNS honorary SES'ers, Harold McLean (left) makes a joke as Joseph Leo (center) and Acting Administrator Scott Dunn share the laugh.

Under McLean's leadership over several years, NERO cut the region's food stamp errors by 35 percent, saving over \$68 million, and created "Make Your Food Dollars Count," now a major national initiative teaching food stamp recipients how to get the most nutrition out of their food stamp dollars.

McLean is quick to point out that "this award is a positive recognition of the individual commitments and hard work of all NERO employees. I applaud their efforts and thank them."

Leo also credits his award to the support and quality of his staff. "I've enjoyed a high degree of support from my colleagues. Without them, my agenda would not have been accomplished. I've also been very fortunate to find such a strong talent base."

Since joining FNS in 1984, Leo has been a strong advocate of service and teamwork. Automation and attempts to "revolutionize the way we work, from a nonautomated system, to one where automation is essential in accompanying our mission," have been set in place under Leo's direction.

Leo has stressed the importance of investing in the future. "It's important to get excited about the strategic outlook for the future of FNS, as opposed to just worrying about the present," says Leo.

-Story by Lisa Yue
Photo by Pamela Faith
Office of Governmental Affairs
and Public Information



"Meal Counts Count" at ASFSA



Passing out "Meal Counts Count" buttons, as they staff the FNS booth in the exhibit hall at the ASFSA conference are (left to right) MWRO Administrator Monroe Woods, WRO Acting Administrator Jack Boozer, Acting Associate Administrator George Braley, and SERO Administrator Virgil Conrad.

Among the more than 4,000 participants at this year's 43rd Annual Conference of the American School Food Service Association held at Orlando, Florida, were representatives from headquarters and all seven regional offices. The agency was featured on the workshop agenda for 3 consecutive days, with presentations and questions primarily focusing on AccuClaim and the Federal Review System.

A new display of the "Meal Counts Count" campaign was unveiled at the FNS booth in the exhibit hall and drew very favorable reviews from conference participants.

The FNS delegation, led by Acting Associate Administrator George Braley, also participated in a reception hosted by outgoing President Shirley Watkins for the ASFSA Executive Board at the Embassy Suites Hotel.



Regional office staffers pose with Acting Associate Administrator George Braley in the FNS meeting room at the ASFSA conference. (Left to right) Dave Alspach, MPRO; Charles Kirby (partially hidden), SERO; Virgil Conrad, SERO; Braley; Ianna Bushman, SERO; John McClellan, MARO; Ann Hector, MPRO; Jack Boozer, WRO; Monroe Woods, MWRO; and Carol Fahey, WRO.

-Story and photos by SERO
Public Affairs Staff

MWRO and SWRO Discuss Performance Evaluation

SWRO Food Stamp Program Director Don Arnette (second from right) met with MWRO Food Stamp Program staff to discuss organization and operation of the performance evaluation for the Food Stamp Program. Left to right: Assistant Food Stamp Program Section Chief Susan Young, MWRO Food Stamp Program Director Dustan Van Vleet, supervisory food program specialist Gilda Karu, Arnette, and Assistant Food Stamp Program Section Chief Robert Flannery.



-Story and photo by Mary Jane Getlinger
MWRO Public Affairs Staff

MWRO Honors FD Director for Heroic Efforts and...

Superior Officer in Charge John Lukan (left) and St. Paul Officer in Charge Al Stavig recently presented a certificate of appreciation to White Earth Food Distribution Director Saul "Sonny" Saice for his quick thinking and heroic efforts in extinguishing a warehouse fire. Saice saved 275,000 pounds of commodities that were stored for distribution for approximately 1,400 participants.



...Recognizes Retiring Indian Reservation FD Director



Superior Officer in Charge John Lukan recently presented a certificate of appreciation to retiring Fond du Lac Indian Reservation Food Distribution Director Anna Marie Locke.

-Story and photos by Mary Jane Getlinger
MWRO Public Affairs Staff

Policy Access System is Developed by MPRO



Margaret Thiel of the MPRO food stamp staff is by nature an organized person and likes bringing order to all the work that comes her way. Years ago, Thiel began organizing an endless maze of policy memoranda so regional office food stamp staff could easily find answers to policy questions from states and those arising from quality control reviews.

The first step was sorting the memos by category, which made finding the right memo or set of memos easier. Next, she tried to develop a software program using BASIC that would store and sort memoranda and letters. The breakthrough came about when MPRO acquired dBase software. Thiel became the primary force behind development of a menu-driven system using dBase III+ to store and retrieve policy information.

The new Policy Access System (PAS)--as programmed by MPRO's resident computer expert Charlie Closs--is being made available initially to Iowa, Wyoming, South Dakota, and North Dakota, and through Carbon Copy to all field offices. Hard copy indices have been provided to all states, and regional office Food Stamp Program specialists can access the system. MPRO has also developed guides for state and field office staff who use the system.

While the system requires some initial effort as new items are issued, it

(PAS Continued Next Page)

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ultimately saves time when accessing, filing, and storing data, and by eliminating duplicated efforts. As computers become the space-condensing filing systems of the future, most backup hard copy now occupying space in archival storage can be eliminated. When headquarters and the regions become fully networked, initial entry can be made at the source to eliminate local rekeying. In years to come, Thiel's organizational compulsion could streamline FNS policy access across the country.

-Story by Joanne Widner
Photo by Craig Forman
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

NERO Showcases Project IRIS

The New York City Field Office faced a monumental task--10,000 retailers under its auspices and a manual system of authorizing them.

There had to be a better way out there...

So, NERO's Automated Data Processing and assistant regional administrator staffs went to work on it, and they did come up with a better way--Project IRIS (Integrated Retailer Information System).

Developed in dBASE III Plus, compiled in Clipper, the project is expected to automate the food stamp retailer authorization process. Security issues were a major factor in its development.

This system is being piloted in one county in New York (Manhattan--which has more than 1,500 participating retailers) and offers numerous benefits. As the information is taken from the retailer, it will be entered directly into the computer eliminating the need for the retailer to fill out forms. And the system software is set up so that a variety of crosschecks are immediately made about the store, the

store address, the owner, and the person applying as the information is entered. Under the current system, this information is checked manually.

NERO showcased this pilot project July 19 in the Boston regional office. Iris Peasley, programmer of the system, demonstrated its capabilities to Joe Leo, Pat Porter, Vernon Morgan, John Middendorf (Minneapolis Computer Support Center), representatives from MARO, MPRO, and MWRO, as well as regional and field staffs.



Iris Peasley (left), NERO program analyst, and Paul Havey (center), computer program analyst, discuss the finer points of the Integrated Retailer Information System (IRIS) with Tom Pate, MWRO deputy administrator.

"This system will have a profound effect on the timeliness and accuracy of checking on a store," said Harold McLean, NERO administrator. "We are at a point in time when I feel that in the next few years we're going to see major changes in the ways field offices operate by use of computerized systems, especially as they impact on authorizing retail stores and monitoring how retail stores redeem food stamps."

-Story and photo by NERO
Public Affairs Staff

USDA Federal Women's Program Manager Visits MARO

In recognition of Women's Equality Day, MARO's Federal Women's Program (FWP) committee invited Barbara Gary, FWP manager at USDA, to discuss Women in Government: Past, Present, and Future.

Gary felt the greatest progress for women has been in the last 10 to 15 years, due to affirmative action legislation and the push for equality at a time when the economy needed more workers.

She offered advice on successful strategies to prepare for promotional opportunities and how to avoid pitfalls along the way. In addition, Gary shared details on a series of regional conferences planned for women in USDA to prepare women for managerial positions.

"In the future, women will be the primary workforce pool. They will have to be prepared to fill jobs while balancing work on the homefront," Gary concluded.



MARO Administrator Christopher Martin (left), with Barbara Gary (middle), and MARO FWP Manager Carol Savage (right).

-Story and photo by Kim Jabat
MARO Public Affairs Staff

It's Back to the Ohio Woods for Jack Johnston



At his retirement reception, Jack Johnston introduces his wife, Mary, to food program specialist Jeff Derr of the Child Nutrition Division.

Jack Johnston, program budget analyst, has retired after 31-1/2 years of Federal Government service. Jack spent the last years of his career with the Budget Division, where he became one of the agency pioneers in exploring the uncharted waters of office micro-computers. User's manual, toolbox, or just common sense in tow, Jack was the unsung hero of many successful efforts to use equipment ranging from Apple IIe, to Radio Shack TRS 80, to Televideo 816 and 1605, to Wyse.

Jack "worked to the job." If that meant a late night or a bit of home research, he was equal to the task. He has always been candid, innovative, and fun to have around. We wish him the best of luck in his retirement.

-Story by Ken Bresnahan
Budget Division
Photo by Levi Thompson
Public Information Staff

"Estrella Luminosa" (Point of Light) Cited in NERO

The Ibero American Action League, Inc., of Rochester, New York, received NERO's Community Service Award.



NERO Administrator Harold McLean (left) congratulates Domingo Garcia, executive director of the Ibero American Action League, Inc., of Rochester, New York, on the league's selection as the recipient of NERO's Community Service Award. Also present at the ceremony were more than 10 key community leaders as well as the league's Board of Directors.

"This award recognizes the valuable assistance provided by the league to the Hispanic Community" said Harold McLean, regional administrator. "The league's efforts distinguish it as one of the 'thousand points of light' out there serving the community every day."

The league was selected based on its assistance to retailers applying for authorization to the Food Stamp Program and for its contributions toward improving the nutritional levels of the members of the community.

The league provides a variety of programs and services designed to meet the needs of the Spanish-speaking community with a goal of equal access for Spanish-speaking people to

government, service agencies, health institutions, and community organizations.

-Story and photo by NERO
Public Affairs Staff

Pilot Computer Project in Denver

As we enter the new school year, two Denver private schools (Holy Family and Saint Rose of Lima) have a pilot computerization project in place. This is a result of recent emphasis on accountability resulting from AccuClaim regulations, which spurred formation of a computerization committee in the MPRO school programs section. The pilot project for regional office-administered programs began in Colorado in the Denver area.

Of the 28 private schools approached, seven responded. To narrow the choice to two schools, the committee developed selection criteria: enrollment, free/reduced-price participation levels, offer-versus-serve, severe-need breakfast eligibility, etc. Visits to the seven schools allowed the committee to explain the project further and to see any existing computer hardware. When Holy Family and Saint Rose of Lima were selected, both schools were surveyed as to needs, preferences, and areas of major emphasis. Surveys and a questionnaire were sent to 28 software vendors, soliciting bids for the project. Thirteen responded; two indicated they could not meet requirements, and the other 11 could meet needs either partially or completely.

After observing three systems operating in Denver, Adams County, and Colorado Springs public school districts, the committee narrowed the field of vendors to three. Prior to final selection, those three provided demonstrations in the regional office. The program was purchased in August, and the system is expected to be operational later in the school year.

-Story by Joanne Widner
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

Regional Inventory of State Micro-Computer Applications Created by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office

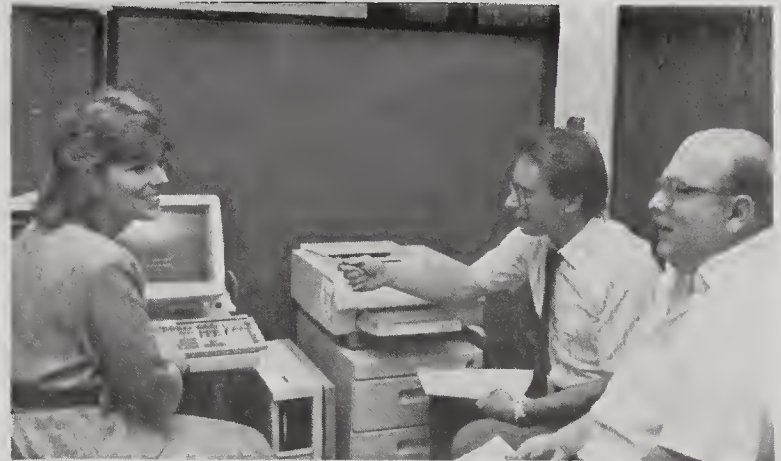
Due to widespread interest expressed in creating a Mid-Atlantic regional pool of information, the Catalog and Regional Inventory of State Micro-Computer Applications (CARISMA) was established.

The database will serve as a resource for states that are developing micro-computer programs by providing a general description of programs currently operating in other states that might be transferable.

CARISMA has already proved its usefulness. For example, the West Virginia Department of Human Services is interested in employing a food distribution program for inventory control that Puerto Rico presently uses.

Once all documents have been entered into the system, a listing of all available applications that pertains to

FNS programs administered by the state agencies will be sent to each state agency or program in October.



Cathy Troast, management information coordinator, trained MARO program staff to access the CARISMA database. Dan Wilusz, financial analyst (middle), and John Nagy, Summer Food Service Program unit leader (right), listen as Troast explains how CARISMA works.

-Story and photo by Kim Jabat
MARO Public Affairs Staff

Savings Bond Participation Increases at the Western Regional Office



Claude Mullen, Treasury Department, presents WRO Acting Regional Administrator Jack Boozer with a lollipop during the question-and-answer section of Mullen's presentation on savings bonds. This year's Savings Bond Drive increased the number of bond-holding employees from 54 to 75, with four increasing their allotments. Thanks to the efforts of drive coordinator Bob Fitzgerald, WRO Food Distribution Division, and to his committee, 35.5 percent of WRO employees now participate in the Payroll Savings Plan.

-Photo and quip by Kristen Bole
WRO Public Affairs Staff

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing by Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Program Analyst	(A)	GS-0345	9/11	10/20/89	89-179	OAE
o Management Analyst	(FNS-N)	GM-0343	13	10/17/89	89-183	ORO
o Operating Accountant	(A)	GS-0510	7	10/31/89	89-185	ACD
o Operating Accountant	(A)	GS-0510	7/11	10/31/89	89-186	ACD
o Management Analyst	(G)	GS-0343	7/9	10/31/89	89-187	MA
o Management Analyst	(A)	GS-0343	7	10/31/89	89-188	MA
o Nutritionist	(A)	GS-0630	12/13	11/20/89	90-H-01	HNIS
o Management Analyst	(FNS-N)	GM-0343	14	10/31/89	90-02	MA
o Secretary Typing	(FNS-HQ)	GS-0318	9/10	10/23/89	90-03	OA
o Secretary (Temp)	(FNS-HQ)	GS-0318	9	10/24/89	90-04	SNP

Office Location

ACD - Accounting Division
 ORO - Office of Regional Operations
 MA - Management
 OA - Office of the Administrator
 HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service
 OAE - Office of Analysis and Evaluation
 SNP - Special Nutrition Programs

Area of Consideration

(A) - All Sources
 (FNS-N) - Food and Nutrition
 Service - Nationwide
 (FNS-HQ) - Food and Nutrition
 Service - Hdqrs.
 (G) - Governmentwide

Mary E. Kennedy, Editor

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CFC Gives Hope Where None Would Exist

The FNS kickoff for the 1990 Combined Federal Campaign will be announced shortly. Watch for flyers!

October 15 through November 15 are the campaign dates, and our goal is \$53,495.00.

Let's all play a part and "Help Someone Have a Better Tomorrow."

See you at the kickoff!

-Story by Mary Kennedy
 Public Information Staff